

Too Close by Introvertia

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Summary:

Hargrove Valentine's Day, because why not?

Too Close

Billy's locker had a handful of Valentine's Day notes and cards stuffed in it, most of them were anonymous. A few of the girls he'd gone on dates with had looked at him hopefully but when he obviously had no flowers, candies or cards hidden on his person, they all acted like they knew better than to hope.

Billy had lost his black leather jacket. He'd been wearing it over his denim jacket through most of January and the first half of February. It was heavier than his brown one, and he liked how it looked layered over his denim jacket. He'd had it before gym class, but wasn't sure if he'd taken it with him to his French class, he'd been caught off guard when he was sent to the front office, he grabbed his messenger bag and walked out of class without looking back at his desk. As it turned out Susan had called his school to send him to pick up Max from the nurse's office at her school. Billy didn't throw any attitude on the phone when he heard Susan's voice, he was too relieved that it wasn't Neil on the other end of the line.

"I'm sorry to bother you at school," her voice was soft and unsure, "but I need you to go get Max. She's in the nurse's office, apparently she's got a fever, can you take her to Dr. Orland's? I set up the appointment already, it's scheduled in twenty minutes, it's the only opening they had. My car's still at the mechanic's, I'd hate to bother your father at work?"

"Okay." Billy replied, distractedly. He'd found another Valentine's Day note, a simple sheet of note paper folded in quarters, this one had been slipped into his messenger bag, the handwriting was absolutely child like, it made him smile for some reason.

"Thank you, Billy."

"Yeah, uh, you're welcome." Billy hung up the phone and stuffed the note back in his bag. He figured he'd read it in the doctor's office,

something to give him a laugh.

Billy didn't have time to double back and look for his jacket, not with the appointment set up, and god forbid word got back to Neil that Billy hadn't taken his precious little sister to the doctor's office on time. He hustled down the hall and out the front doors. The icy air felt like a physical blow, he needed his jacket. He jogged past Harrington's BMW, there was a rose on his windshield, Billy rolled his eyes, if he'd had more time he would have pulled it off of Steve's car and ripped it to pieces, he couldn't help but wonder who left it, he was curious to know if Steve had gotten a girlfriend, Billy hadn't heard anything about any of the Hawkins girls, but there were rumors that Steve was spending time over in Carterville. He thought about Steve often, but never spoke to him, well, they talked, they bantered, they traded words, but it was all just noise, all for show, and on the surface, they never talked about the fight, or anything that mattered, and Billy wanted to keep it that way, there's wasn't really any point to any of it. He focused on driving, he didn't want to think about Harrington, he never wanted to, but yet, he always did.

The drive to Max's school was quick, he found her waiting in the front office, looking flushed and bleary eyed. She was bundled up like the Michelin tire man.

"C'mon." Billy put his hand on her shoulder, she jerked it away.

"I don't want to go to the doctor's."

"Too bad."

"Can't I just, I don't know, go home and die."

"After." Billy pushed her forward, Max grumbled and walked a little faster. Billy could see some pink roses peeking out of the top of her backpack. He didn't need to ask who they were from, and knew better than to rib her about it. She and Lucas were inseparable, and it was only a matter of time before Neil found out and it would be

Billy's funeral, he suddenly felt a little dry mouthed and anxious just thinking about what Neil's reaction might be.

"You better tell Susan those roses are from your friend Jane, or El or whatever you call her."

"Well, yeah. I'm not stupid." Max rolled her eyes, she may be ill but she still had plenty of sass. Billy grunted in reply.

"Where's your jacket?" Max sized him up, she was getting tougher by the second, it annoyed Billy some days, other times he felt oddly proud.

"I don't fuckin' know, why are you worried?"

"Pfft, no, you just look like an idiot running around without a jacket in this weather."

"I know you're not feeling well, you got a little snuffle, but don't think I'm going to put up with your attitude because you feel bad." Billy turned up the stereo. He was cold, and his denim jacket wasn't doing a damned thing to keep him warm.

"Whatever." Max quipped looking out the window.

As soon as Billy parked Max threw open the door, Billy thought at first that she was just pissed off but she started puking her guts out. Billy cut the engine and put the car in park and got out quickly. He walked around to the passenger side and pulled her hair back.

"How much did you eat for lunch?" He snarked, before gently resting one hand on her back, and keeping her hair in the other, he rubbed her back, the way his mother had when he was sick.

"Ugh." Max groaned miserably before throwing up some more.

"You're okay, just get it out and then we'll get inside." Billy mumbled, when she seemed done he steered her by her shoulders into the Doctor's office. Thankfully there was no need to wait, Max was sent in right away. Billy sat down, in the stuffy waiting room and

pulled the last Valentine's note out. He glanced around the beige room, with tan carpets, and chocolate brown stuffed chairs, it was just varying shades of brown with a couple of tacky forest landscapes hanging crookedly on the walls. Billy focused on the note, the writing looked blocky, messy, slanted and sometimes it floated off the lines and other times cutting through them, Billy squinted at the letters, the handwriting looked familiar, but he couldn't think which girl wrote like that. He started reading as he thawed out, sinking back into the stuffed chair.

Billy,

I bet you'll get a ton of notes today because lots of girls want to get with you. Maybe you'll have a great Valentine's Day and get laid. I don't know why I am writing this. Sometimes I think there's something wrong with me because I like you. I always fall for the wrong person, so what's new? I kind of hated you for a while, but now I don't. Weird, right? (I think you hate me.) I think about you all the time. You're smart. You're a (pretty) good athlete. You're good looking and have cool style. That isn't enough reasons to fall for somebody, but I think there's more to you than you want people to see. Sometimes you look sad. I want to talk to you when you look sad. But you would probably punch me. When you get near me it drives me crazy. You always get too close, but not close enough, I know that makes no sense. I don't think there is any point to this. You probably think I'm an idiot. I am not much of a writer. I just want you to know that someone thinks you are special, and not just a tough metal guy, the new guy, or a badass party guy, but a real person and I wish that I could be with you and it makes me sad because it's never going to happen. I really hope that someone you like likes you back and that you get to be with them and be happy.

Billy read it three times in a row, quickly. It was the strangest note he'd ever gotten, but it also felt uncomfortably genuine, he shifted uneasily in the chair, and wondered which girl thought he would punch her, and hated her. He didn't really hate any of the chicks at school, they were okay, he wasn't really friends with any of them. He

tapped the sheet of paper on his nose, thinking which of the girls at school might think he hated them. He didn't much interact with any of them, beyond Carol's girlfriends and a couple classmates. He reread the note. All the other notes had lipstick kisses, and silly phrases like, *from your secret admirer*, *you're so hot*, *XXO* and *be mine*. This one just sounded so forlorn it gave Billy chest pains, no one else wrote that they thought he was special, it was the corniest shit he'd ever read, but it was sincere, he couldn't deny that and it felt sweet, almost innocent. The notebook paper looked rippled, and like it had gotten wet. Billy frowned, holding it to the lamp, it didn't reveal any secret writing, it was just a torn notebook page. He read it again trying deductive reasoning, it wasn't Vicki, Carol or Tina, he was sure of that... he tried to think who had been near enough to slip the note in his bag, who sat behind him in his classes. He hadn't put half as much thought into the other notes.

"Can we go home now?" Max was standing before Billy looking worse than before, she had a lollipop in one hand and a prescription in the other.

"Pharmacy first, shitbird."

"You're an asshole." She narrowed her red eyes at him, and then leaned on him when he stood up next to her.

"Yep, that's my job when it comes to you." He ushered her to the Camaro.

After a stop at the pharmacy and the complete depletion of the contents of Billy's wallet, he got Max home. Susan met them at the door, without so much as a thank you to Billy she took the bag out of his hand and towed Max to her bedroom. He followed a few steps behind.

"I left the receipt in the bag."

"Okay, Billy." Susan said. He doubted he was going to get reimbursed for the drugs, and he had to pick and choose his battles. His gas and cigarette fund had just been used up on Max, and his jacket was

missing. It was official, Valentine's Day was a shit fest. The phone started ringing, Billy attempted to ignore it, it was probably one of Susan's new friends, they were all so nosey and constantly inviting them to church. Billy didn't know how many times he'd have to explain to visiting neighbors that yes, Susan was Protestant but he's Catholic, thanks but no thanks, not going to your church, he didn't want to even talk to them, but he had to make nice or the shit would hit the fan.

"Billy, can you get that?"

"Yes, Ma'am." Billy grumbled as he grabbed the phone.

"Hargrove residence." He said icily, hoping to scare off whoever was calling.

"What are you doing home early?" Neil demanded, his voice harsh coming across a static riddled line.

"I had to pick up Max from school for Susan, she's got a bad stomach flu." Billy said quickly, keeping his voice calm, forcing down panic.

"Tell Susan I'll be working late, that something's come up. You stay home tonight. Is that clear?"

"Crystal, Sir." Billy said flatly.

"Behave." Neil hung up. Billy delivered the message to Susan and went into his room, he closed the door and laid back on his bed. He could hear the crinkle of the paper in his back pocket he pulled it out and read it again.

You're a (pretty) good athlete.

"I'm the best one at the school!" Billy argued as he read.

I want to talk to you when you look sad. But you would probably punch

me.

"I'm not sad, I'm, just thinking... I would never punch a girl. What kind of animal do you think I am?" Billy lit up a cigarette, he smirked to himself, he was kind of enjoying his one sided conversation with his Valentine. He smiled, whoever this was, she was his Valentine. She'd never know it, and if he figured out who she was he'd never tell her, but she was it. The girl that wrote this. He hadn't had a Valentine since he was fourteen, it made him chuckle. Maybe it wasn't the worst Valentine's Day ever, sure he was single and some weird girl at school had a boner for him, or a crush or whatever it was that girls got, but it was kind of nice, but a little sad too.

When you get near me it drives me crazy. You always get too close, but not close enough...

"I know you're not Lauri from science lab, her writing is stupid, so many curly Qs and shit." He frowned trying to think of other girls he had to get near to because of class. No one, there was no one he could think of.

I wish that I could be with you and it makes me sad because it's never going to happen.

"You're probably right there, Valentine. But don't sweat it, most of us never get with who we want." Billy took a slow drag from his smoke and blew a ring up at the ceiling. He was glad Neil wasn't coming home till late, he didn't want to see him. Susan would be busy with Max, so at least Billy would have some peace, even if he was stuck at home.

I really hope that someone you like likes you back and that you get to be with them and be happy.

“It’s not going to happen, but it’s a nice thought, I guess.” Billy sighed and rested the note on his stomach. He didn’t even care who it was from now. He was just glad to have it, it meant something, it was real. Not all the flowery bullshit, just kind of raw and honest, and terrified. He knew that feeling. He flipped it over and read it again.

I just want you to know that someone thinks you are special

“Thanks, are you a freshman? You write like a freshman, but it’s okay Valentine, you’ll get better at writing, although it’s kind of nice some dork thinks I’m special,” Billy’s eyes scanned the letter again.

I always fall for the wrong person

“...and maybe you’ll learn to fall for better guys.”

Why had they written person, and not wrong guy, or dude, or boy? Billy’s heart did a little flop. He sat up looking at the writing. What if it was from one of the guys, or had one of the guys written it as a joke? It did look like a guy’s writing, or maybe not. Why rib him about being a *pretty* good athlete? What if it was from a girl jock? There were a few of them, but he never really interacted with any of them, there weren’t a lot of co-ed sports at Hawkins High.

He shoved it in his back pocket and stubbed out his cigarette. He was

starting to annoy himself, he laid on his back trying not to think about who wrote the letter, but it was all that he could think about. He sat up sitting lotus and dumped his messenger bag on his bed before him, he sorted out the Valentine's that were signed, and separated them from the ones that were anonymous, he was getting nowhere with figuring out who the letter was from, but one thing was for sure, everyone else had better penmanship than *his* Valentine.

The doorbell rang, he heard Susan calling for him to get the door.

"Yeah." He griped as he got up. It was probably Mrs Joyce from across the street, nosey hag, Billy fumed as he walked to the front door and jerked it open.

"Hey." Steve stood on his porch, Billy was genuinely startled, he frowned.

"What the fuck do you want, Harrington." It wasn't really a question, so much as a very long expletive.

"Yeah, hey, sorry to bug you. You left this in the locker room." Steve was holding Billy's leather jacket. Billy looked at the jacket and up at Steve's face, and down at the jacket again.

"I thought you might need it." Steve continued, his voice growing fainter.

"How the fuck do you know where I live?"

"Vicki told me." Steve held up a scrap of paper with the address scrawled on it as if it was forensic evidence that he'd gotten the information from Vicki. Billy glanced at the little piece of torn notebook paper, it wasn't Vicki's writing, it was *his* Valentine's writing. Billy grabbed the scrap from Steve's fingers and looked at it closely.

"You?" Billy's eyes popped wide for a split second.

"What?" Steve stepped back looking a little flustered, "Here. Take it. Fuck, sorry man, just, whatever." He shoved the jacket into Billy's

arms and turned and hopped off the porch before Billy could react or say anything. Billy tossed his jacket on his weight bench and looked at the scrap of paper, he pulled the note out of his back pocket and held them side by side. There was no doubt, Steve Harrington was Billy's Valentine.

Steve got home around a quarter to seven, it was still early-ish. He'd left Billy's house feeling like a total dipshit, why had he even bothered to deliver Billy his jacket? He could have given it to Vicki and she would have gotten it back to him. But what if she'd kept it? What if she wore it? The thought of someone, anyone really, wearing Billy's jackets made Steve feel angry. It had been a long day of bad choices, slipping the stupid note into Billy's bag, taking Billy his jacket, and then going out to eat a couple of lonely slices of pizza had been the worst choice ever. Everyone in Hawkins had been out with their significant others. Old people in matching winter beanies, kids from school dressed up and holding hands. Mike and Jane, and Hop had been at the diner, he'd seen them in the window and just barely avoided running into them that's when he'd decided on Pizza. He'd spent Valentine's Day eating pizza and watching the world go by, alone and dejected. He'd told himself he was going out to take his mind off of things, things being Billy, and also so he wouldn't be stuck in the house moping, but being out made it all worse.

He'd tried it on. Billy's black leather jacket, the one that he'd first seen him in on Halloween night, Steve hadn't had any feelings about Billy then, he just thought that the new guy from California was a little intense and needed to relax, that night was rough, it was the beginning of the end for him and Nancy, Halloween had been the tipping point, booze had been Nancy's truth serum.

The jacket had fit pretty well, it smelled nice too, like leather and smoke, and Billy's cologne. Steve had sat in his car wearing Billy's jacket for maybe ten minutes before deciding he should return it, that stealing it was a dick move, and that Billy probably couldn't afford a real winter coat. But it had just been there, left on the bench in the locker room, abandoned. People always left things laying around,

Steve usually ignored whatever was left, but this was Billy's jacket. Steve had really wanted to keep it. Instead he'd walked back towards campus, he'd nearly collided with Vicki and when he'd asked her where Billy was she looked insulted. She'd rattled off the address almost too fast for him to jot it down in his notebook, it was a small town, but Steve didn't really know all the little side streets in *that* neighborhood. Vicki had asked Steve where he was taking his date tonight, Steve had just laughed and walked away, he couldn't tell if it had been a deliberate dig or if she was just fishing for information.

Steve had just kicked off his shoes when he heard the doorbell chime. He rolled his eyes and headed downstairs. His parents were in Chicago on some business seminar or was it a romantic getaway? He hadn't read the note and didn't really care. He was just glad they were gone, it wasn't like it made a difference when they were home. He opened the front door and there was Billy, Steve raised his brows.

"Uh, hey."

"This is swanky neighborhood you got here. Are you going to invite me in? Or am I interrupting something?"

"What do you want?"

"Really? You're going to be like that, Harrington?"

"Like what? I went by your place to give you your jacket and you didn't exactly roll out the red carpet. You get what you give."

"That's clever, you get what you give." Billy's voice lowered to a purr and he stepped forward crowding into Steve. "I should write that down. Maybe you have a pen I can borrow?"

"Very funny." Billy watched a blush creeping up Steve's neck.

"Well, it's okay if you don't have a pen on you. I know you're not much of a writer."

"What?"

"That's what you said, well, wrote." Billy's tongue poked out between his teeth briefly, he was starting to feel less nervous and far more

excited than he'd expected to. "I think you have a certain charm though, not exactly a poet, but a kind of frankness that has its appeal." Billy moved closer still, Steve took a half step back, and ran his hand over his head, eyes lowered, cheeks on fire.

"I... just forget about that."

"I don't want to," Billy replied in earnest, his blue eyes clear and guileless, Steve looked at him, really looked at him and saw a surprisingly soft expression on the normally animated and wolfishly handsome face "and, I don't hate you."

"No?" Steve tilted his head, caught off guard and curious.

"Nah." Billy rested his hands on Steve's ribs, recalling what Steve had written about him getting too close but not close enough, he trailed his palms over Steve's waist and rested them on his narrow hips and squeezed. Billy's eyes lingered over Steve's mouth and watched as those soft wide lips parted releasing a gentle sigh.

Steve felt a tremor run through his body, he cupped Billy's face in his hands and kissed him. It wasn't a timid kiss, and Billy felt the heat of it all the way down his core, he dug his fingers into Steve's dark hair returning the kiss hungrily.

"Shut the door."

"Mm-hmm." Billy kissed him deeply, his tongue sliding over Steve's lips deliciously, his hands slipping over Steve's ass and squeezing and tugging his hips forward and rolling into him. Steve pulled back from the kiss and out of Billy's grasp and stepped towards the door closing it, Billy came up behind him hands on either side of him, caging him to the door. Steve glanced at him over his shoulder, and turned around to face him; his large honey colored eyes traveling over Billy's face, darting from his mouth to his eyes. Steve grabbed hold of Billy's belt buckle and pulled him forward.

"Am I going to get lucky?" Billy asked, his tone a mixture of mocking and yearning.

"You're here with me aren't you?" Steve unbuckled Billy's belt and

pulled down his button fly, Billy's stomach clenched in a small jump of anticipation just before Steve's hand slid around his cock. Steve's hand was warm and his touch was confident and steady, he leaned in and started biting and kissing up the side of Billy's throat. Billy groaned low and loud. They kissed wetly, Billy palms pressed to the door on just above Steve's head.

"Too close?" Billy's breath was hot on Steve's neck, his voice low and breathy.

"Not close enough." Steve arched against the door, moving closer. Steve worked Billy till he was aching, his eyes glossy with desire, mirroring Steve's, their lips swollen from kissing and biting. Billy grabbed the waist of Steve's shirt and pulled it up till his stomach was exposed, and rutted his hips forward, Steve encouraged him, groaning pleasurable and Billy crushed him into the door.

"*Billy*," Steve whispered breathlessly into the other boy's ear, "*Billy*." Steve leaned into him, stroking hard and strong. Steve knew how to handle him, and it wasn't long before Billy came over Steve's stomach, and hand. Steve wrapped one arm around Billy's waist and pulled him close with surprising strength, squeezing a sigh from Billy. Steve was still stroking and squeezing out the last drops making Billy twitch with pleasure.

Billy started to peel himself away, but Steve pulled him back.

"Where are you going?" Steve sighed.

"I can't stay." Billy looked at him with his bright eyes, his brows starting to knit.

"I'm not surprised." Steve looked away, but didn't let go of Billy's waist.

"It's not like that." Billy gave Steve a quick peck, a sheepish and conciliatory gesture.

"Isn't it?" Steve looked at Billy, suspicious, but hopeful.

"It's..." Billy drew a breath looking away, he didn't want to admit he was terrified that Neil would get home before he did.

It's alright, this was more than I thought would ever happen." Steve said sincerely, his hands falling away from Billy.

"Harrington, I can't stay, but can I see you, tomorrow?" Impulsively Billy grabbed Steve's wrists, not quite holding his hands.

"Seriously?" Steve held still, letting Billy hold onto his wrists, it surprised him, he liked it, not just the sensation, but Billy's hunger to stay connected.

"Yeah, I mean. If you want to." Billy glanced at Steve's eyes, and his mouth, the moles on his jaw, he didn't know where to look, suddenly it was like Steve was the sun, flushed and beautiful and his, all his.

"If I want to what, jerk you off again?" Steve teased gently, goading Billy to say more.

"Yeah, but not just that." Billy huffed.

"Then..." Steve pressed his luck, enjoying being there alone with him.

"I don't know, I could, treat you like a real one..."

"A real what?"

"You know take you out for a drive or a burger or whatever, get some booze."

"You mean a date?"

"You're my Valentine, right, Harrington?"

"Yeah, yes, I am. If you're mine?"

"Jesus, Harrington. Yes, I'll be your Valentine." Billy turned bright red, he felt ridiculous, but knew Steve needed to hear him say it.

"No bullshit?"

"No bullshit." Billy sighed.

"Okay, Valentine." Steve wrapped his arms around Billy's neck and

kissed him slowly.

“God damn, you’re corny.” Billy smiled watching Steve bashfully turn his face away.